NICARAGUA/

JENNINGS: Well, the Sandinistas have long maintained that CATHOLIC CHURCH the CIA is using Nicaraguan church officials to reach that goal. As ABC's Anne Garrels reports from Nicaragua, that has led to a lot of tension between church and state.

> GARRELS: At times, the archbishop of Managua resorts to psalms to get his message across, Psalm 139, wishing a shower of burning embers and vipers on those who would destroy the church. At other time Obando y Bravo is less metaphorical. For five years, he says, the church has been persecuted by the Sandinistas. The most recent showdown began with these videotapes. A Nicaraguan priest, Father Amado Pena, was shown on television discussing weapons with an alleged U.S.-backed rebel. Pena was subsequently caught on camera with a bag. It was said to contain a bomb. Claiming Pena is innocent, that he was set up in yet another effort to discredit the church, Obando led a protest march. The Sandinistas immediately retaliated by expelling 10 of the foreign priests working here. The Sandinistas have repeatedly charged the church with working with the CIA. To undermine Obando, the Sandinistas have encouraged a pro-government, popular church like this one, arguing there is no contradiction between Christianity and revolution. The official Catholic church, though, remains strong, the strongest anti-Sandinista force in this overwhelmingly Catholic country. A man who once called for an uprising against the Somoza dictatorship, Obando is now fighting the Sandinistas. He says he seeks only justice, though his services increasingly resemble political rallies. Relations between the Catholic church and the Sandinistas have never been worse. Each claims to be the moral authority here; each is struggling for power. Anne Garrels, ABC News, Managua, Nicaragua.